

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 17 and 19-32 are pending. Claims 17, 20, 22 and 25-31 have been rejected. Claims 19, 21, 23, 24 and 32 were merely objected to, and no claims were allowed. By entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 19, 28 and 30-32 are cancelled, claims 17 and 26 have been amended, and no new claims have been added. Support for the amendments may at least be found at in the claims as originally filed, including the specification and drawings as originally filed. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider his rejection with regard to the claims as amended herein and in consideration of the remarks that follow.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants would like to thank the examiner for indicating the subject matter of claims 19, 21, 23, 24 and 32 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Examiner asserts claims 17, 20, 22 and 25-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art ("AAPA") in view of U.S.P.N. 5,272,307 to Jones ("Jones") in view of U.S.P.N. 5,906,364 to Thompson et al. ("Thompson") and in view of U.S.P.N. 5,884,906 to Morse ("Morse").

Applicants have amended independent claim 17 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of dependent claim 19 and have amended independent claim 26 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of dependent claim 32 and the subject matter of intervening dependent claims 28, 30 and 31.

For at least this reason, Applicants contend amended independent claims 17 and 26 are patentable over the combination of AAPA, Jones, Thompson and Morse as cited by the examiner.

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request the examiner withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) and find that claims 17, 20, 22 and 25-31 are allowable.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, it is submitted that all of the claims as pending patentably define over the art of record and an early indication of same is respectfully requested.

An earnest and thorough attempt has been made by the undersigned to resolve the outstanding issues in this case and place same in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or feels that a telephone or personal interview would be helpful in resolving any outstanding issues which remain in this application after consideration of this amendment, the Examiner is courteously invited to telephone the undersigned and the same would be gratefully appreciated.

It is submitted that the claims as amended herein patentably define over the art relied on by the Examiner and early allowance of same is courteously solicited.

If any fees are required in connection with this case, it is respectfully requested that they be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-0184.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: June 12, 2007